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MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

To the Senate and House of Representatives
of the Confederate States:

In obedience to the constitutional provision requiring the President from time to time to give to the Congress information of the state of the Confederacy, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient, I have to communicate that since my message to the Provisional Congress events have demonstrated that the Government had attempted more than it had power successfully to achieve. Hence, in the effort to protect by our arms the whole of the territory of the Confederate States, sea-board and inland, we have been so exposed as recently to encounter serious disasters. When the Confederacy was formed, the States composing it were, by the peculiar character of their pursuits, and a misplaced confidence in their former associates, to a great extent destitute of the means for the prosecution of the war on so gigantic a scale as that which it has attained. The workshops and artisans were mainly to be found in the Northern States, and one of the first duties which devolved upon this Government was to establish the necessary manufactories, and in the meantime to obtain by purchase from abroad, as far as practicable, whatever was required for the public defence. No effort has been spared to effect both these ends, and though the results have not equalled our hopes, it is believed that an impartial judgment will, upon full investigation, award to the various Departments of the Government credit for having done all which human power and foresight enable them to accomplish.

The valor and devotion of the people have not only sustained the efforts of the Government, but have gone far to supply its deficiencies.

The active state of military preparation among the nations of Europe in April last, the date when our agents first went abroad, interposed unavoidable delays in the procurement of arms; and the want of a Navy has greatly impeded our efforts to import military supplies of all sorts.

I have hoped for several days to receive official reports in relation to our discomfiture at Roanoke Island, and the fall of Fort Donelson. They have not yet reached me, and I am, therefore, unable to communicate to you such information of those events, and the consequences resulting from them, as would enable me to make recommendations founded upon the changed condition which they have produced. Enough is known of the surrender at Roanoke Island to make us feel that it was deeply humiliating, however imperfect may have been the preparations for defence. The hope is still entertained that our reported losses at Fort Donelson have been greatly exaggerated, inasmuch as I am not only unwilling but unable to believe that a large army of our people have surrendered without a desperate effort to cut their way through investing forces, whatever may have been their numbers, and to endeavor to make a junction with other divisions of the Army. But in the absence of that exact information which can only be afforded by official reports, it would be premature to pass judgment, and my own is reserved, as I trust yours will be, until that information is received. In the meantime, strenuous efforts have been made to throw forward reinforcements to the armies at the positions threatened, and I cannot doubt that the bitter disappointments we have borne, by nerving the people to still greater exertions, will speedily secure results more accordant with our just expectation, and as favorable to our cause as those which marked the earlier periods of the War.

The reports of the Secretaries of War and the Navy will exhibit the mass of resources for the conduct of the war which we have been enabled to accumulate, notwithstanding the very serious difficulties against which we have contended.

They afford the cheering hope that our resources, limited as they were at the beginning of the contest, will, during its progress, become developed to such an extent as fully to meet our future wants.

The policy of enlistment for short terms against which I have steadily contended from the commencement of the war has, in my judgment, contributed in no immaterial degree to

the recent reverses which we have suffered, and even now renders it difficult to furnish you an accurate statement of the army. When the war first broke out many of our people could with difficulty be persuaded that it would be long or serious. It was not deemed possible that any thing so insane as a persistent attempt to subjugate these States could be made—still less that the delusion would so far prevail as to give to the war the vast proportions which it has assumed. The people, incredulous of a long war, were naturally averse to long enlistments, and the early legislation of Congress rendered it impracticable to obtain volunteers for a greater period than twelve months. Now that it has become probable that the war will be continued through a series of years, our high-spirited and gallant soldiers, while generally re-enlisting, are, from the fact of having entered the service for a short term, compelled in many instances to go home to make the necessary arrangements for their families during their prolonged absence.

The quotas of new regiments for the war, called for from the different States, are in rapid progress of organization. The whole body of new levies and re-enlisted men will probably be ready in the ranks within the next thirty days. But, in the meantime, it is exceedingly difficult to give an accurate statement of the number of our forces in the field. They may, in general terms, be stated at four hundred regiments of infantry, with a proportionate force of cavalry and artillery, the details of which will be shown by the report of the Secretary of War. I deem it proper to advert to the fact that the process of furloughs and re-enlistment in progress for the last month had so far disorganized and weakened our forces as to impair our ability for successful defence; but I heartily congratulate you that this evil which I had foreseen and was powerless to prevent, may now be said to be substantially at an end, and that we shall not again during the war be exposed to seeing our strength diminished by this fruitful cause of disaster—short enlistments.

The people of the Confederate States being principally engaged in agricultural pursuits, were unprovided at the commencement of hostilities with ships, ship-yards, materials for ship building, or skilled mechanics and seamen in sufficient numbers to make the prompt creation of a Navy a practicable task even if the required appropriations had been made for the purpose. Notwithstanding our very limited resources, however, the report of the Secretary will exhibit to you a

satisfactory progress in preparation, and a certainty of early completion of vessels of a number and class on which we may confidently rely for contesting the vaunted control of the enemy over our waters.

The financial system devised by the wisdom of your predecessors has proved adequate to supplying all the wants of the Government notwithstanding the unexpected and very large increase of expenditures resulting from the great augmentation in the necessary means of defence. The report of the Secretary of the Treasury will exhibit the gratifying fact that we have no floating debt; that the credit of the Government is unimpaired, and that the total expenditure of the Government for the year has been in round numbers one hundred and seventy millions of dollars; less than one-third of the sum wasted by the enemy in his vain effort to conquer us—less than the value of a single article of export—the cotton crop of the year.

The report of the Postmaster General will show the condition of that Department to be steadily improving—its revenues increasing, and already affording the assurance that it will be self-sustaining at the date required by the Constitution, while affording ample mail facilities for the people.

In the Department of Justice, which includes the Patent Office and Public Printing, some legislative provisions will be required, which will be specifically stated in the report of the head of that Department. I invite the attention of Congress to the duty of organizing a Supreme Court of the Confederate States, in accordance with the mandate of the Constitution.

I refer you to my message communicated to the Provisional Congress in November last for such further information touching the condition of public affairs as it might be useful to lay before you; the short interval which has since elapsed not having produced any material changes in that condition other than those to which reference has already been made.

In conclusion, I cordially welcome representatives who, recently chosen by the people, are fully imbued with their views snd feelings, and can so ably advise me as to the needful provisions for the public service. I assure you of my hearty co-operation in all your efforts for the common welfare of the country.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

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